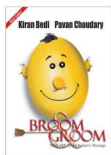
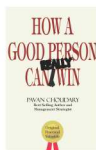




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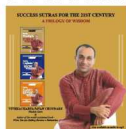


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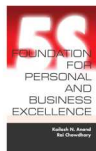
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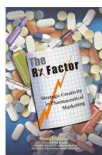
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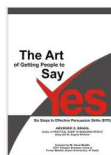
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Pavan Choudary

A Brief Introduction

Pavan Choudary is the author of path breaking books like *How a Good Person can Really Win, Broom & Groom* (co-author Kiran Bedi), *A Trilogy of Wisdom* (on Chanakya, Confucius and kabir), *Machiavelli for Moral People*, *Uprising 2011: Indians against Corruption* (co-author Kiran Bedi), *When you are Sinking become a Submarine* and *The Rx Factor*. Pavan is also the Managing Director of Vygon, a leading French Multinational, chairs the Medical Equipment Division of CII, hosts the TV program *Hum Aise Kyun Hain* on Doordarshan, and has written columns for The Times of India and Financial Chronicle. He sits on some of the most respected advisory boards of India and is a much sought after Management Strategist. To know more visit www.pavanchoudary.in or follow him on twitter @AuthorPavan.

Other Books by Pavan Choudary

1. How a Good Person can Really Win
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4. Machiavelli for Moral People
5. When you are Sinking Become a Submarine
6. The Rx Factor: Strategic Creativity in Pharmaceutical Marketing
7. Broom & Groom (on Hygiene and Manners) co-authored with Kiran Bedi
8. Uprising 2011- Indians Against Corruption co-authored with Kiran Bedi

Praise for the Author and his Books

A Trilogy of Wisdom (on Chanakya, Confucius and Kabir)

Each book in this collection of mini books has great depth...there is great insight on political sharpness, social gain and spiritual intelligence - to aid the ambitious soul.

- Hindustan Times

This book has been able to capture the spirit of Confucianism. It is most appropriate that it dwells on the social aspect of Confucianism. It talks of Social Harmony, which is key to Confucius.

- Mr. Xei Fei (Cultural Head, Chinese Embassy)

How a Good Person can Really Win

This book is for real people in the real world with insights, practical wisdom and a fresh perspective for everyone...the alternative of course, is to read up hundreds of books over tens of years!

- Carolyn Marcille (Barnes & Noble, New York, USA)

Pavan Choudary's passion for dwelling deep into the questions one feels remain unanswered, has ensured him a place amongst the foremost thinkers of the world.

- The Times of India

An invaluable, timeless treasure. Pavan is a megamind taking Indian thinking to refreshing new heights in the global arena. His works should be made compulsory reading for leaders, teachers and parents.

- Dr. Kiran Bedi

The Rx Factor

Kip Piper, Senior health Advisor to the White House Office, USA, has included The Rx Factor in his list of Top 10 books on Pharmaceutical Marketing. To view the list you may visit amazon.com at <http://www.amazon.com/Pharmaceutical-Marketing-Bookshelf-Recommended-Piper/lm/2RUHJCQM7ERX0>

I strongly recommend this book for all pharmacy students and marketing professionals...it gives a creative landscape for Pharmaceutical marketing filled with innovative and practical marketing strategies.

- Dr. B. Suresh, President, Pharmacy Council of India

Broom & Groom co-author Kiran Bedi

Broom & Groom by proud Indians Kiran Bedi and Pavan Choudary is a collector's item. A must on every book shelf.

- Deccan Chronicle

Indians and civic sense don't often go together. That may change if our worthy countrymen take broom & groom to heart.

-The Telegraph

It addresses separate categories- students, government officials, and so on and the illustrations help make it a useful handbook for people who badly need it.

-The Times of India

Machiavelli for Moral People

Want to read a politician like a book...read Machiavelli for Moral People.

- The Tribune

INTRODUCTION

Saint Kabir has been one of the most unique Indian poet thinkers. Achieving a peak in spiritual consciousness, Kabir was not just a spiritual guru. Kabir's dohas or couplets have been widely translated and attempts to interpret them have also been made. However, most of this interpretation is esoteric and academic. It often does not do justice to this great master of his times.

The following pages truly highlight the essence of Kabir, not as a poet or spiritualist alone, but as a Success Guru. Wisdom Guru Pavan Choudary, in this inimitable compilation, is making Kabir address issues of mentoring, love, friendship, humility, courage, desire, success, greed, speech, wisdom and many others - that present themselves before us. One often wonders if Kabir knew of the dilemmas of the 21st century or have the predicaments of life been the same always.

Is enlightenment an illusion?

What is self realisation?

What defines a spiritual person?

Can spirituality and material success coexist?

How can one create enduring bases to success?

As the commentary to follow addresses the above questions, many more questions get answered along the way. Guiding you towards successful pursuits through spiritual indoctrination, you are about to witness as never before, a trance into self realisation and achievement through Kabir.

जौन मिला सो गुरू मिला, चेला मिला न कोय ।
चेला को चेला मिलै, तब कछु होय तो होय ॥

*Kabir says that the world is full of egoists and Gurus.
Very few realise that a true guru or mentor is a disciple first.
True knowledge exchange is possible only when one understands this fact.*

In this couplet, Kabir says that the world is full of egoist gurus. Very few realise that a true guru is one who is a disciple also; the quest / thirst for knowledge is so deep in him, that he always moves with the metaphorical school-bag on his shoulder. Such gurus are rare. Most gurus know or have a lopsided view of reality.

In India, there exists the guru-shishya parampara (teacher-student tradition), which invokes the student to behave in a particular way with the teacher. This tradition tells the student that he should be respectful and highly obedient to his guru. The purpose of the tradition was to orient the student so that he could learn from the guru. But we are very smart people. We looked at the tradition and thought to ourselves that the guru gets so many advantages in this relationship. He is in a really comfortable and enviable position. So then why become a student, let's become a guru only. And so everybody in India wants to become a Guru.

I had a peon in my office who was about 60 years of age. His name was Phool Singh. He was a very ordinary peon. His caliber was ordinary and his work

ethics were also nothing to write home about. But we kept him, as we knew that he would be retiring shortly. And every time there was a religious ceremony in the office, whether Diwali or Holi, because he was the eldest, we allowed him to offer prayers, standing in the centre with the *Aarti thali* (a plate carrying condiments and offerings for invocation to the Lord). At such occasions, I used to stand on his right and my Head of Sales, on his left. Soon he retired and went to his village. Recently, when I was approaching my office, I saw a bearded man at my door step. He greeted me, I greeted him back respectfully. And then I heard him say, “Sir, have you not recognised me?” I peered closely only to find that it was our Phool Singh! So I asked him about his attire, “What's all this Phool Singh? Why are you donning orange clothes and a beard?” He said, “I have become a guru Sir.”

So I said, “Ok. So you have become a guru in your village in Uttar Pradesh?” He said, “No Sir. I did go there and I wanted to become a guru there, but there were already so many gurus Sir, who did not want their monopoly to be upset. They had formed a cartel and they told me that I could not practise there. So I went to Bastar (a region near Raipur in Chattisgarh, one of the Central states of India). I have settled down there. Now everybody in and around the village knows me.” “That's very good.” I said.

“Sir, they know you also.” He said.

And I felt, Wow! My word has reached the remote corners of Bastar. From Boston to Bastar, my word was reaching everywhere and I felt very good.

“How is it that they know me?” I asked.

He took out a file and on one side of the file there were pasted several clippings

of newspapers with my picture with some captions saying 'Pavan Choudary in town'. These were about six months to a year old, when a newspaper called Dainik Bhaskar had invited me to Chattisgarh and then provided the publicity. Looking at those clippings, I felt that he was like my ambassador telling about me to everybody. Only until I looked at the other side of the file where I saw that there was a big Diwali picture, where he was standing in front of the Goddess Lakshmi offering prayers and I stood on his right and my Head of Sales on his left. Now I understood what he must have been telling everyone “This is the teacher / guru (who is being talked about in the clippings). He used to be my right hand man when I was in service and was my student.”

I was intrigued and I almost felt how ingenious he was to improve his credentials so. Also as he was a bit of a wishy-washy or slippery kind of person even when he was in my office so I wasn't surprised by what he was doing.

So I asked him, “What kinds of questions are asked of you?”

“All kinds of questions are asked and I answer them absolutely perfectly.”

“Give me an example.”

“Some people ask me, where does God live. So I tell them, He lives in *Kshir Sagar**. I tell them that there is a lotus popping out of his navel. He is lying on a bed of roses.”

So sure he was that this is where God lived.

Who has taught Phool Singh?

Another such guru has taught him.

A guru who has no understanding of God or godliness. Many such people are propagating things that they do not know or things they have not experienced.

**Kshir Sagar is the name of a mythological sea.*

They are propagating them to every willing listener. And this is the issue that Kabir is trying to attack. Kabir says that first be a student and then be a teacher and even when you are a teacher, stay a student. Keep learning. As long as this metaphorical school bag, I mentioned before, is on your shoulders, you will keep learning, you will keep young and one day you can even qualify to be a real guru. Guru in Hindi means, the one who makes darkness disappear, the one who lights your path. You will become a true guru only when you become a true student.

जब मैं था तब गुरु नहीं, अब गुरु है मैं नाहिं ।
प्रेम गली अति सांकरि, तामें दो न समाहिं ॥

*Kabir says that when in a state of ego
a disciple cannot connect to his Guru.
And when he does achieve that connection with the Guru
and absorbs true knowledge, ego vanishes.
So narrow is the lane of love between the Guru and disciple
that it has no room for ego.*

Ego has its uses and Kabir knows about them. Ego is a defense mechanism. It helps you defend your interest. However, one should use ego as a rain coat. Only when there is rain, do you use a raincoat. It is not part of your daily attire, you don't wear it all the time. If you were to wear it everyday or all the time, then you would be uncomfortable. You would also make others around you very uncomfortable.

In this verse, Kabir says that ego is of no use in the classroom. But how is ego born in a student ? The first reason for the birth of ego in the student is exploitation by the teacher. Many a teacher has exploited the student by asking him to drop his ego, by asking him to obey blindly. Infact, history is full of teachers like these. And in such a case, ego surfaces in a student to defend his own self-interest. The other, more important reason for the birth of ego is because of all the egalitarian talk happening in the West and coming to the East. As the world has become a global village whatever is uttered in the West, almost

simultaneously reaches the East. And cultures are porous to this influence.

When Alexander came to India, he found that in India the king is treated like a God. So he declared himself a king. In the West, when Aristotle's nephew protested against this declaration and said that he did not accept Alexander's God-hood, Alexander had him executed. Then, when Aristotle, who had coached Alexander, went to him and told him that he had made a grievous error by executing his nephew, Alexander said, "Even philosophers are not immune to my wrath." He was telling Aristotle that in case he also did not accept his God-hood, he would not hesitate in executing his teacher as well. Such was Aristotle's Eastern influence on the West. This was the time when the East was culturally and socially, far ahead of the West. Today we have the western influence on the East. The people in the West, rather the ignorant people in the West are saying that all men are equal. They are talking about egalitarianism and this is even reaching the ears of the students. It has become another reason for the birth of ego in the students.

Through the birth of the student's ego, the sacred space between the teacher and the student gets violated. Kabir knows of this 'sacred space'. He knows that this sacred space is critical to learning. In its absence, no learning will happen. Kabir's point has been validated by Freud also. Freud also speaks of the sacred space between the teacher and the student without which, exchange of learning does not happen. I wouldn't say that Freud visited India or that he learnt it from Kabir (It is very fashionable among us Indians that whenever we hear something which resembles what our great men have said by someone else in the West, we

immediately try to bring a teacher-student connection there). The books that I have read do not say that Freud visited India, but Freud was a peak in consciousness, as was Kabir. And as it often happens, two great men, thousands of miles away from each other or separated by hundreds of years, think of the same thing.

For that matter, Buddha also knew that a space of respect needs to be present between the teacher and the student. Only then can the teacher share his learnings with the student. There is an episode in Buddha's life, before his enlightenment. As he gets enlightened, he goes to a woman who is an *untouchable** and accepts coconut rice from her and eats to his heart's content. He has five disciples then, who see him doing this. At that time, Buddha was advocating complete abstinence and penance. He was advocating living on just one grain of rice a day. And these disciples now see him eating to his heart's content and moreover, eating from a woman's hand and that too an untouchable woman. They feel the master has been corrupted. They don't understand that enlightenment has taught him that all these things don't matter. What you eat, through whose hands you eat, are of no consequence and in no way connected to enlightenment. The master had realised that penance is not the door to enlightenment. But the students were judging him by the standards that he had set for himself as well as for them. So these five students desert Buddha. Once Buddha realises this, he goes looking for them. And he finds them sitting at a river bank. As he is approaching them, among each other, they decide not to give him any respect. They decide to address him as *Gautam*** and not as the enlightened one. So when Buddha approaches them, they behave

**Untouchable* = from the lowest caste.

***Gautam* was Buddha's first name.

disdainfully with him and also address him as Gautam. This is when Buddha says, “I have discovered the truth and I want to share it with you. If you would disrespect me and call me Gautam, somewhere at the back of my mind, I will be uncomfortable, my sharing will not be spontaneous, and you might miss me. So continue to behave with me just as you did earlier and continue to listen to me.” Buddha is re-establishing the 'sacred space' necessary between a teacher and a student for exchange of knowledge to happen.

This space has been recognised by Buddha, by Kabir, by Freud and now even by Sarkozy. Nicolas Sarkozy (President of France) also spoke of the same space when he in his election manifesto said that he would make the students address the teachers as Wu not Tu. (In Hindi, Aap is the equivalent of the French, Wu and Tu of Tu). Essentially, he says, that teachers will be addressed more respectfully by the students. That means that he understands this over egalitarian approach is leading to chaos. People are becoming less educated rather than more educated. They are more aware about their rights but they are completely ignorant about the truth because they are not willing to give to the teacher the space to teach them. The same truth has been acknowledged by L. Porter, one of the leading lights in the fields of education. His research says, the good students appreciate discipline, because discipline enables an environment in which they can learn. The bad / trouble-making students also appreciate discipline. This finding shakes or challenges the 1990s belief in laissez-faire, that spoke of giving the child his complete and unbridled freedom reflected in the song,

*We don't need no education, we don't need no thought control,
no dark sarcasm in the classroom, teacher leave the kids alone.*

If the guru is a good guru, the student will realise that he has much to gain. If the student is worthy and respectful, the guru gains confidence in the future of their relationship. He also gains comfort in sharing what he knows and what he feels is very important for the student to know. Ego from both ends starts vanishing. The student and the teacher start fusing or becoming one. They start becoming one family or the best of friends who guard each others interest, who have each other's genuine interest in their hearts. They become one. This is what Kabir means when he says, *Prem gali ati sakri, jaame do na samaye*, that is, their identities start fusing and they become unaware of the fact that they are two people. They start thinking, feeling, and operating like one unit.

भय बिन भाव न ऊपजै, भय बिनु होय न प्रीति ।
जब हिरदे से भय गया, मिटी सकल रस रीति ॥

*Kabir says that without an element of fear,
it is difficult to feel happiness or sorrow.
Fear is important even to feel affection for the Guru.
In the absence of fear, one loses reverence for his master and
can easily abandon all ethical behaviour,
resulting in a loss of his own identity.*

Every mother, once in a while, has to scare her child. Why? Does she not love her child? No. If there is one expression of love, it is the love between the mother and the child. She loves her child, almost as she loves herself, and sometimes even more. Ever wondered how easy it is to please a mother? You just have to say, “Mom, I’m hungry.” - This is enough to galvanize her into action. And she is on an ecstatic trip now. She is making / cooking something for her child. And while you might think it is labour, it is only a labour of love for her. And that is the kind of love she has for her child. Then, why does she scare the child once in a while. Two reasons Sometimes there is an urgency of result which is required. Maybe she has to board a train and the child is not letting go. So the mother says, “Let me go now or the policeman will catch you.” Or sometimes, the child, because of his lack of knowledge and understanding, is about to harm himself or another, which is when the mother uses a scare tactic. Now even when she uses this tactic and the child responds negatively by crying against it, somewhere at the back of the child's mind, he understands that what

the mother is doing is in his best interest. So, the mother in many ways preserves the child. With time, this bond of love between the mother and the child is able to grow with the understanding that discipline is important.

By fear, Kabir refers to discipline. For him discipline is a type of love only. It is a tough love. But the quality of fear generated should be good. That is, the person being disciplined must understand that this discipline is for his long term good. It is not to harass him or not to give him what is his due. It is for his good. It is this kind of fear that Kabir talks of in this couplet. He feels that without this kind of fear, often love can't be born, and if born, love will not flourish if such a fear is completely absent.

Also fear serves as the backdrop for love. For love to stand out, you need a background. In order to think of yourself as a man of love, you will have to give up the idea of thinking of yourself as a man who never goes to war. History has called upon men for such decisions. This is true in most individual and personal relationships. Life may, more than once, call upon you to prove who you are by demonstrating an aspect of who you are not. Have you ever wondered why Jesus Christ, a true man of love, chased out the money-changers with a whip? Perhaps, because he knew that love wouldn't work there. Or he felt that the time for love was up. It was time for discipline. This kind of discipline accentuates the image of love. It becomes the right background through which love stands out and is not taken for granted. This is another way in which fear or discipline makes love more prominent, more noticeable, more worthy.

However, a good guru knows when to use love and when to use fear. Imagine, a

peon in my office comes to me and says that he needs some money to buy books for his son and if he can get a loan for that. I have a few thousand rupees in my pocket and I willingly give it to him and I know I'm never going to ask him to give it back. Next day, another peon comes with a similar request and I tell him to manage his finances better, he would get nothing from me and I ask him to go away. He leaves with moist eyes, dejected and disappointed. But I am at peace because I know that this peon is a drunkard. He is careless with his money and not responsible in his duty towards the organization or towards his family, so I send him away and my inner voice does not protest. If I had similarly sent the first peon away, who was a responsible, dedicated employee, then my inner voice would have protested. It would have asked *what you are doing. This is not the way to behave with this man*. So you have to train your inner voice to speak. And you have to learn to listen to this inner voice. If you can do that then depending on the need of the situation, you know when you require love and when you need to be tough.

This is another couplet full of Kabir's candor. Very few people have been able to express things so candidly. In this book we have tried to study and comment on those couplets which are not hyperbolic. They are true, practical and carry the eternal essence of life in them.

छिमा बड़न को चाहिए, छोटन को उतपात ।
कहाँ विष्णु को घट गयो, जो भृगु मारी लात ॥

Kabir says that a senior person must have the ability to pardon his juniors.

*After all, the Supreme God, Vishnu, did not in any way
become less honourable when, as Hindu mythology states,
the Saint Bhrigu, gave him a kick.*

*Lord Vishnu was quick to forgive him.
To forgive is not a sign of weakness but of great strength.*

By fighting with those smaller than you, you define yourself as pettier than what you are. The enemy you engage with, describes you. Your antagonist is your definition also. Because of this reason and out of compassion for those below you and out of understanding that they may be blind or lacking in wisdom, you should forgive these people even when they commit a mistake or offend you. As per Indian mythology, when Saint Bhrighu, reached Vishnu, the Lord of the world, to complain about the severe injustice and torment people were facing because of the demons, he saw that Lord Vishnu was relaxing, as if, unconcerned about his people. Out of anger, Brighu kicked him. But Vishnu overlooked this serious offence and forgave Brighu. This instance Kabir recalls in this couplet. He exhorts you to forgive those who are smaller than you. Ofcourse, this couplet is valid only up to a point.

धीरे धीरे रे मना, धीरे सब कुछ होये ।
माली सींचे सौ घड़ा, रितु आये फल होये ॥

*Kabir says that the universe moves at its own pace.
You cannot force the speed of the universe, just as
you cannot make a seed sprout by pouring hundred buckets of water on it.
It will sprout only when spring comes.*

This verse comes from a deep understanding of how the universe functions. Kabir knows that the universe moves at its own pace. You can't force the speed of the universe. So he advises you to be patient. He believes in perseverance, not persistence. Persistence can sometimes be counterproductive and sometimes worthless. Imagine you are a doctor and an infertile couple comes to you and without going into the details of the case you tell them to persist, to just go on doing it. Do you think they would be successful through persistence? Nothing will happen. You have to find out what is the problem, why is it that the woman can't conceive and so on. There is some kind of an insistence in persistence. Though persevering is a mark of determination, insistence is more like stubbornness that tries to dismantle the rhythm of the universe. Insistence can be counterproductive. You should return to your battles, to your struggles, to your pursuits not out of stubbornness but when you sense that the weather is favourable. Otherwise display patience; work patiently, and persevere patiently - not stubbornly.

राम बुलावा आया तो, कबीरा दे दिया रोए ।
जो सुख साधु संगत में, बैकुंठ में न होए ॥

Kabir says that the company of good men is so fulfilling and satisfying that one would not want to lose them even for heaven.

Kabir shares how fulfilling it is to be in the company of good people. And he says, “God has called me to heaven but I am not interested in going. I am really enjoying with my good friends (good people).” For him this communion with good people (Satsang) is more important and better than salvation. He has found good people and he has experienced the bliss of their company. This couplet is coming from that blissful experience.